



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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RIDLEY-THOMAS CALLS FOR REPORT ON COUNTY'S EFFORTS TO EXPAND HEALTHCARE COVERAGE

LA County Will Become National Model for Implementation of Healthcare Reform

Los Angeles—Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas today introduced a motion directing Los Angeles County departments to detail the County's efforts to enact the \$10 billion California Medicaid waiver recently approved by the United States Department of Health and Human Services' Center on Medicare and Medicaid Services. The federal funds will enable California to provide Medicaid-like coverage to uninsured low income persons years sooner than the rest of the nation.

"This Medicaid waiver presents an unprecedented and time-limited opportunity for Los Angeles County to transform its public health system," said Supervisor Ridley-Thomas. "With its enactment, Los Angeles County could become a model for the realization of President Obama's national health reform agenda."

The motion directs the Chief Executive Officer, the Department of Health Services, the Department of Public Health and the Department of Mental Health to report back to the Board of Supervisors on the County's plans to expand healthcare coverage to individuals who were previously uninsured, to incentivize

public hospital systems to improve their delivery of patient care, and to move seniors and persons with disabilities into managed care.

“This is the single most important countywide health policy development in the last five years,” said Supervisor Ridley-Thomas. “Effective and carefully planned execution of this waiver must be a top priority, so that we can both maximize federal funding and improve patient care.”

In addition to expanding healthcare coverage, the federal funds will provide an opportunity to fundamentally restructure the delivery of medical, mental health, and substance abuse treatment services in Los Angeles County. Public hospital systems will receive strong financial incentives from a pool of \$600 - \$700 million to improve their delivery of patient care; payment will be tied to performance, not simply to services provided.

The waiver also includes funds for medical providers who are providing services to patients whose access to services were severely reduced when MLK Hospital closed. The new MLK Hospital is expected to be substantially completed January 31, 2013.

The report will also detail County’s plan to prepare its workforce to implement the waiver, including workforce manpower shortage areas, workforce training needs, and flexibility needed to better align existing resources to the rapidly changing environment. Performance metrics will also be proposed to measure infrastructure development, innovation and redesign, population-focused improvements and urgent improvements to care.

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